

New Minister responsible for Supporting People

In December Malcolm Chisholm MSP resigned as Communities Minister. His replacement was announced on 9/1/07 as Rhona Brankin MSP, formerly the Deputy Environment and Rural Development Minister.

In his letter of appointment First Minister Jack McConnell said 'Housing and homelessness remain a key policy area for this Executive'.

Although the Supporting People programme was not referred to directly as a priority, the decisions the minister makes about future spending on SP as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review will have a profound impact on the delivery of housing support services over the 3 years beyond 2007/08. Des McNulty MSP remains the Deputy Minister for Communities.

Local authorities may carry forward unspent SP into 2007/08

The Scottish Executive has confirmed for local authorities that any unspent SP grant this year can be carried forward into 2007/08.

This maybe good news for providers working in those areas where SP grant in 2007/08 will be less than in previous years and where the local authority has been able to keep within this year's grant.

In Edinburgh, for example, the council will be able to avoid making further reductions in April because the carry forward will buy time to find the savings

necessary to bring their SP spend into line with their budget allocation by the end of 2007/08. (The grant level for Edinburgh reduces from £39.78m in 06/07 to £36.66m in 07/08)

Further research into the impact of funding changes

The Scottish Executive is continuing to build up a picture of the impact of the funding changes on housing support services since the SP programme was launched in 2003.

To date most of the Scottish Executive's information has come direct from local authorities but it has recently been acknowledged that this is not providing sufficient insight into the situation that providers and the services they manage now face.

In partnership with the Scottish Executive, the SP Enabling Unit is working with Community Care Providers Scotland and with the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations to address this.

It is likely that a questionnaire survey will be conducted with providers working in selected local authorities to find out about funding levels and service volume levels since 2003.

The survey will be focused on examining how providers have maintained service levels to the extent that they have so far managed to despite the general funding reductions in real terms.

Whilst the Unit does not wish to add to the burden of information requests providers are already under we do hope to find a range of willing participants. Your help would be much appreciated!

supportingpeople

enabling unit

Bulletin

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SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

The Supporting People Enabling Unit is a partnership initiative between Community Care Providers Scotland (CCPS) and the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), funded by the Scottish Executive.

Service Review

In 2003 the Scottish Executive gave local authorities the task of reviewing all housing support services in their area to assess them for cost effectiveness, strategic relevance and quality. The findings of the review were to be used to decide whether or not the service should receive continued funding and enter into a full contract with the local authority. Service reviews were to be completed by March 2006 but this was extended to March 2007 when it became apparent that local authorities were having difficulties meeting the original timescale. Since then delays in completing service review has continued. Local authorities have reported that there are 2200 Supporting People services in Scotland. By November 2006 949 had been reviewed leaving 57% of reviews still to be completed. The Scottish Executive has recently reiterated its requirement that authorities complete service reviews by the deadline.

SPEU research into service review

Over the past 9 months the SP Enabling Unit has worked with providers to research the process and outcomes of service review for providers in the independent sector.

Key findings from the research have shown that:

- Local authorities have varied in how they undertake service review
- There has been considerable delay in undertaking service review
- Providers have questioned the relationship between service review and Supporting People funding decisions.
- There is significant concern amongst

providers about the accuracy of service review reports

- Providers have had concerns about the sustainability of housing support services under the current funding and review system.
- Providers face a considerable amount of duplication in the information requirements of different regulatory bodies and service review added to this burden.

If you would like more information about this piece of work please contact moira.weir@ccpscotland.org

Impact of delays in carrying out service review on cost recovery

Delays in starting and completing service review has had a serious impact on providers ability to recover costs and to plan for the future.

One Housing Association who participated in the research currently manages more than 5,000 houses in 22 local authority areas throughout Scotland.

Delays in the service review process has meant it has not been able to enter into negotiations with local authorities about future funding and this has had a considerable impact on the organisation's ability to plan for the medium to long term.

In the run up to the start of Supporting People in April 2003 the Housing Association was asked by each local authority it operated in to submit financial information of their current running costs. The Housing Association complied with this and the Supporting People grant was calculated using the costs from 2002/03. Since then the Supporting People grant has not kept up with inflation and the Housing Association is now running at a loss in every local authority area. The national deficit for its Supporting People services in 2004/05 was 15%.

There have been considerable delays in completing service review in most local authority areas that the Housing Association works in. In August 2006:

- 3 local authorities had completed their review process
- 7 local authorities had started service review but had no stated end date
- 10 local authorities had not started the service review process
- 2 local authorities had chosen to use a different monitoring process

The Housing Association has found that no local authority is prepared to discuss price and contracting before service review has taken place. This means that the slow progress of service review has created real difficulty.

As a major Housing Association it has a rolling

programme of refurbishment and renewal for its properties which is planned 10 - 30 years in advance. The management committee is now concerned that the current deficits will compromise the organisation's future development in the medium and long term and means that plans for renewal will have to be revised. They have made the decision that if service review is not completed by December 2006 they will move to contract discussions because they must have a price in place for April 2007/08. In addition the committee has decided that the price agreed through contract decisions must reflect the actual running costs of the service as the Housing Association cannot continue to carry a deficit in funding. If the local authority and the Housing Association cannot agree a price that reflects actual running costs then cuts in service provision will be inevitable.

Impact of delays in carrying out service review on business planning

The lack of progress on service review has also impacted on the ability of some providers to review organisational structure in order to consolidate expansion.

A small housing association on the west coast of Scotland has experienced considerable delay in starting its service review and this has had an ongoing impact on the organisation's future development.

The Housing Association has three warden services, two of which came as part of a stock transfer process. The Association has been keen to review its warden services to ensure that all its employees were on equitable terms and conditions and that the services provided were appropriate to the needs of the tenants. The local authority agreed that the housing support service needed re-organisation but said this should be done in conjunction with the Supporting People team's service review.

In preparation for the review the housing association produced 3 fully costed options which it wanted to discuss with the local authority and submitted these in December 2005. The service review process was started in December 2005 but personnel changes within the SP team meant that meetings planned for February 2006 had to be postponed and by August 2006 the service review had still not

been completed.

Organisational and personnel changes within the local authority have caused problems for the Association and local authority workers alike and has meant that communication with the local authority had become more difficult. This has been disappointing as previous relationships were very good and included regular forums which allowed for positive working relationships to develop.

The Housing Association's staff have been consulted about changes to their conditions of service and working operations and are keen for this to be resolved quickly. The delays and the uncertainty over the service review have meant that staff have not been given an accurate time scale for change. This has been unsettling for them. The changes also impact on the tenants and will involve considerable tenant consultation to progress. This process takes time and it has been frustrating that delays in service review means that a review which everybody agreed was needed from early 2005 has not progressed to a conclusion.

SP decision makers within local authorities

LA	SP Team?	Who is responsible for SP?	Where does SP sit within the council?	Who makes decisions on service review outcomes?
Aberdeen	Yes	Strategic Leadership Service	Strategic Leadership Service	Head of Service and Strategic Planning Manager unless provider contests decision in which case a Commissioning Board makes the final decision
Aberdeenshire	Yes	Social Work	Housing & Social Work	SP Lead Officer, although Strategy Group consulted and Director of Housing and Social Work makes decision on contested reviews.
Angus	Yes	Principal Contracting Officer Social Work and Health	Social Work and Health	SP Steering Group
Argyll & Bute	Yes	Community Services Dept.	Planning&Performance from Jan07	Community Services Management Team
Clackmannanshire	Yes	Services to People	Housing	SP Strategy Group - Chaired by Director, Services to People - group includes Head of Housing and Head of Social Work
Dumfries & Galloway	Yes	Housing Services	Housing Services within Adult Services	Committee
Dundee	Yes	Supporting People Management Team	Social Work Dept	Supporting People Management Team, Appropriate Committee as necessary
E Ayrshire	Yes	Housing	Housing	Steering Group comprised of SP Lead Officer, Social Work Policy and Operations Manager
East Dunbarton	Yes	SP Lead Officer	Social Work	SP Lead Officer
East Renfrewshire	Yes/contract monitoring	Commissioning	Community Health and Care Partnership	Head of Service and Commissioning Manager
East Lothian	Yes	Social Work	Business Support Unit	Service Review Panel
Edinburgh	Yes	Services for Communities	Services for Communities	Senior Management Teams in Services for Communities and Health and Social Care
Falkirk	Yes	Housing & Social Work	Housing & Social Work	Decisions ratified by Director of Housing and Social Work. If provider contests decision it is referred to Committee to make final decision.
Fife	No	Housing & Social Work	Housing & Social Work	SP Core Coordination Group (includes Senior Managers in SW and Housing)
Glasgow	Yes, within Contract Management	Service Modernisation	Social Work	Head of Service Modernisation and Head of Finance
Highland	Yes	Housing	Housing	Service Review Panel comprised of Heads of Housing and Social Work, Housing Strategy and Community Care

SP decision makers within local authorities

LA	SP Team?	Who is responsible for SP?	Where does SP sit within the council?	Who makes decisions on service review outcomes?
Inverclyde	No	Contract Monitoring	Social Work Services	Resource Allocation Group comprising Lead Officers and Service Managers responsible to Head of Service
Midlothian	No	Social Work Director and Community Care Manager	Social Work	SP Planning Officer, SW Contracts Officer, Community Care Manager and Director of Social Work
Moray	Yes	Housing	Housing	Committee
North Ayrshire	Yes	Housing	Housing	Housing and Social Services managers play lead roles & process being developed to ratify decisions
North Lanarkshire	Yes	Corporate Team	Social Work	SP Team/ Senior Management and either Social Work Committee or Housing Committee
Orkney	Yes	Head of Strategic Services Community Social Services	Community Social Services	Social Services and Housing Committee approve outcomes; service improvement plans agreed by Directorate and monitored by SP Officers Group
Perth & Kinross	Yes	Housing and Community Services	Housing and Community Care Services	SP Lead Officer or whereservice improvement needed then SP Core Coordination Group decides
Renfrewshire	Yes	Social work	Principal officer (joint commissioning)	Policy Board
Scottish Borders	Yes	Housing and Social Work	Social Work	Core Coordination Group including representation from legal officer and health.
South Ayrshire	Yes	Housing & Social Work	Housing	Director of Housing & Social Work
South Lanarkshire	Yes	Head of Support Services	Housing and Technical Resources	Core Coordination Group and some decisions referred to the Social Work Committee
Shetland	Yes	Housing	Housing	Housing
Stirling	No	SP Management Team	SP tasks carried out by officers in various teams	SP Management Team (comprising of Housing, Community Care Services, Childrens' Services, Finance and Contracts)
West Dunbartonshire	No	Manager of Resources	Social Work	Director of Social Work Services
Western Isles	No	Social Work	Social Work	Principal Officer & Director of Social Work
W Lothian	Yes	Social Policy	Social Policy	Committee although any issues addressed by Social Policy Management Team and Coordination Group/ Senior Management Team

Care Commission Inspection 2007/08

The Care Commission has announced the main inspection focus areas and national care standards they will be inspecting in 2007/08.

All care services will be inspected on Standard 3: Management and Staffing Arrangements. This means that throughout the year Care Commission inspection will focus on how people in receipt of services are protected. When assessing the National Care Standard, the Care Commission will take particular interest in:

- Child Protection in Adult Care Services
- Adult Protection
- Restraint
- Staff Training Plans/ SSSC Codes

For housing support services the Care Commission will also be inspecting

- Standard 7: Exercising your rights
- Standard 8: Expressing your views

When assessing Standards 7 and 8 there will be an emphasis on Quality Assurance systems: including service user participation and feedback

For combined Care at Home and Housing Support inspections the Care Commission will inspect:

- HSS Standard 7: Exercising your rights
- HSS Standard 8: Expressing your views
- C@H Standard 11: Expressing your views

Further information will be available on the Care Commission website before the 1st April 2007 and providers will receive a letter updating any changes and providing information on any developments for inspection in 2007/08

Notifying the SSSC

The Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) is responsible for registering people who work in social services and regulating their education and training.

All social service workers, including housing support workers and their employers must abide by the SSSC's Codes of Practice for Social Service Workers and Employers of Social Service Workers.

If workers conduct themselves in a way that is contrary to the SSSC Code of Practice then employers have a duty to inform the SSSC. This duty is laid out in Section 32 of the Smoking, Health and Social Care (Scotland) Act 2001. Section 57A and Section 57B of the Act require that:

- The employer of a social service worker, including housing support services, will let the SSSC know when they dismiss a worker on the grounds of misconduct or would

have done so or considered doing so had the worker not resigned or abandoned their position. At the same time the employer will give the SSSC an account of the circumstances.

- The employer of a social service worker will, when asked to do so, provide the SSSC with information on the worker which the SSSC may reasonably require in undertaking its regulatory functions.

For more information about when and how to notify the SSSC on staffing matters please contact the SSSC on 0845 60 30 891.

To view the SSSC's Code of Practice go to their website at www.sssc.uk.com/NR/rdonlyres/761AD208-BF96-4C71-8EFF-CD61092FB626/0/CodesofPractice21405.pdf

Glasgow Community Care Providers Forum (GCCPF)

Charlie Barker, the manager of GCCPF, provides the following insight into the setting up of the GCCPF and the role it has undertaken in Glasgow.

The seed for Glasgow Community Care Providers Forum (GCCPF) was sown over 3 years ago when a group of providers created the Forum's foundations with a committee. They encouraged other providers to join them as members, consulted on Supporting People issues and successfully applied for funding.

Early last year, Glasgow City Council awarded GCCPF £58,268, for 3 years, to recruit a Manager and part time administrator. In April, with staff in post, the Forum was ready to action the initial vision.

The Forum exists to identify, represent, promote and safeguard the interests of voluntary organisations, private care companies and registered social landlords delivering social care in Glasgow.

It aims to be an influential body, using member's expertise to effect change and act as a communication bridge between providers, purchasers, funders, planners and regulators.

By creating opportunities for issues to be raised, the Forum acts as host to bring key people together to agree helpful ways forward in partnership working.

An example of this was the pre- Christmas SP meeting with Glasgow City Council, where representatives from GCCPF SP Group presented on behalf of the wider Forum to press home the impacts of no inflationary uplift on providers in Glasgow.

The Council restructuring meant SP functions were represented across Finance, Service Modernisation, Contract Management & Commissioning and Care Teams.

Issues covered during the meeting were the increase in Glasgow's SP grant (from £71,77M to £78.85M), an acknowledgement that £5M is tied to hostel re-provisioning, an update on SP reviews & the model contract and clarification that there is no intention to put existing services out to tender.

This open communication enabled both providers and the Council to understand each others' worlds, give vital information publicly and help to acknowledge the pressures all were working under. In conclusion all were keen to regularise future meetings and share the work together.

As a result of this meeting, the Forum's manager has set up six weekly meetings with the Contract and Commissioning Manager to start to map the route providers and care teams can take to work together in 2007.

**For more information about the Forum please contact:
Charlie Barker- GCCPF manager
0141 332 4632
or email
info@gccpf.org.uk**

For Your Noticeboard

Supporting People Providers' Regional Events

The SP Enabling Unit is running a series of regional events for service providers across all sectors (eg. voluntary and private sectors and registered social landlords). The events are half day and will include a networking lunch.

The aim of these events is to consider national and local developments on Supporting People particularly with regard to service reviews, commissioning and progress on full contracts. In addition to this the events will consider workforce registration issues as well as providing an opportunity to have your say about regulation and how it can be improved.

There is no charge for attending the events but places must be booked in advance by emailing Mark O'Donnell at sp.unit@ccpscotland.org

Speakers will include:

Local authority commissioners

Wendy Johnston, Scottish Social Services Council

Heather Dall, Scottish Executive

SP Enabling Unit and the Workforce Unit

The events will take place as follows:

Aberdeen 5th February 2007

Dumfries 8th February 2007

Dalkeith 12th February 2007

Inverary 26th February 2007

Hamilton 19th March 2007. This will be a whole day event jointly delivered by SPEU and the Workforce Unit

Supporting People Matters

The Scottish Executive produces a quarterly newsletter on Supporting People issues called Supporting people matters. The newsletter includes updates on SP and articles on good practice within the housing support sector. The newsletter can be viewed electronically on www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Housing/Housing/supportpeople/Page9

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